multinational foreign companies to invest in the mining sector in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor alongwith the details of such companies;

(c) the details of companies which have sent their proposals;

(d) the terms and conditions of the agreements; and

(e) the time by which these are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) and (b). The National Mineral Policy, 1993, envisages, inter-alia, private investment both domestic and foreign in the Mineral Sector. Foreign technology and investment is required particularly for the exploration of high value and scarce minerals.

(c) to (e). Foreign Investment Promotion Board has approved the investment pattern of 27 proposals recommended by the Ministry of Mines for investment in the mining/metallurgical sector. However, the grant of Prospecting Licence (PL) and Mining Lease (ML) is governed by the Provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 and the rules made thereunder. Applications for grant of mineral concessions have to be made to the respective State Governments only. Further, only in respect of minerals included in Schedule-I of the MM (R and D) Act, 1957 prior approval of the Central Government is necessary.

[English]

Indian Labour Conference in Delhi

*108. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA :
PROF. OM PAL SINGH 'NIDAR':

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether a session of Indian Labour Conference was held recently in Delhi;

(b) if so, the outcome/recommendations thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether the problems of agricultural/construction/ fish contractual labourers were discussed and their representatives were invited in the conference, and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken to ensure the interests of these workers?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) The 33rd Session of the Indian Labour Conference was held at Delhi on 24th and 25 October, 1996.

(b) During the course of discussions in the conference, the main recommendations, inter alia, were:

(1) Workers Group suggested that Wage ceiling fixed for payment of bonus/productivity linked bonus should be removed. However, the Employers' Group urged a total review of the Bonus Act.

(2) Ministry of Labour should convene a meeting of Union Ministries of Labour, Finance and Textiles and Trade Unions and concerned State Governments to expedite a decision on implementation of the Turn Around Plan for revival of sick mills of National Textile Corporation.

(3) Ministry of Labour should again write to the State Governments to revive the practice of holding tripartite consultation at the state level by constituting truly and appropriately representative tripartite bodies and by holding its meeting atleast twice a year.

(4) A Bipartite Committee should be constituted with a view to frame a comprehensive industrial law and their report may be submitted by 31st January, 1997. The Bipartite Committee should consider proposal to amend the Trade Union Act, 1926 and recognition of trade unions through secret ballot, on a priority basis and submit its recommendations within a month.

(5) The disparity in the ceiling fixed for the payment of gratuity for Central Government employees and industrial workers should be removed.

(6) A national floor level minimum wage for unorganised establishments should be fixed taking into account the updated poverty line basis. Some of the Workers representatives also wanted the Floor level Minimum Wage to include a component based on the decisions of the Supreme Court and that, minimum wage should have automatic indexation with cost of living and reviewed frequently.

(7) Vocational training programme of DGE and T should be re-oriented towards improving the quality of vocational training and upgradation of skills. Similarly Employment Exchanges should be modernised and re-organised to function as effective placement centres.

The conclusion/recommendations of the Indian Labour conference are given due consideration while examining the relevant issues in the Ministry of Labour. Action has already been initiated on some of the recommendations.

(c) and (d). During the course of discussions in the conference, several participants raised problems of workers in the unorganised sector like agricultural and contractual labourers etc. The Conference was informed of latest development on a Comprehensive Legislation

providing for labour protection, social security, minimum wages, etc. for agricultural workers.

Representation to Trade Unions in the Conference is determined on the basis of an established procedure based on varified strength of the trade unions. Sectoral strength is not the only criterion for consideration of representation in the conference.

Inland Air Services and Amenities to Passengers

*109. PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state :

(a) the steps taken by the Government to revamp and make punctual the inland air services and to provide amenities to the passengers;

(b) whether the private air services are attracting more passengers in comparison to that of the Indian Airlines;

(c) if so, the reasons therefor;

(d) the action proposed to be taken by the Government to make Indian Airlines more attractive and profitable; and

(e) the prospective action plan of the Government in view of rising requirement of the domestic air services, increasing number of passengers and operating more air services?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) To provide additional capacity and a competitive market environment, the Air Corporations Act, 1953 was repealed on 1st March, 1994. It enabled the entry of private airlines in the domestic sector which not only provided additional capacity but also improved services for the benefit of the passengers.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Indian Airlines is taking steps to improve its product, image and on time performance to attract more passengers and increase revenue.

(e) With a view to ensure regular and dependable air transport service in the domestic sector, a review of the policy framework is under consideration.

Draft Bill Regarding Right to Information

*110. SHRI RAM NAIK : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Press Council of India has given a draft Bill to the Government regarding right to information;

(b) if so, the salient features of the draft bill; and

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A *statement* is enclosed.

(c) The draft Bill on Right to Information formulated by the Press Council of India is under examination of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

STATEMENT

Salient Features of the Draft Bill on Right to Information

The Bill seeks to impart to the citizens of the country the Right to Information relating to affairs of a 'public body' including :

(a) 'State' within the meaning of Article 12 of the Constitution of India;

(b) All public undertakings and non-satutory authorities;

(c) A company, corporation, society, trust, firm or a co-operative society, whether owned or controlled by the Government or by private individuals and institutions whose activities affect the public interest.

2. The public body has been cast the duty of maintaining all records duly catalogued and indexed and making it available to the person requesting information.

3. The right extends to all individuals, whether citizens or not, in so far as the information affects their life and liberty.

4. The information can be withheld by the public body, for reasons to be recorded in writing if —

(a) its disclosure is prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of the country, or to the security of the State, and friendly relations with foreign Sates, or public order, investigation of an offence or which leads to incitement to an offence;

(b) it is related to personal and medical information and other such information, the disclosure of which has no bearing on public affair and would constitute a clear and unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;

(c) if it relates to trade and commercial secrets protected by Law.

Provided that information which cannot be denied to the Parliament or the State Legislature shall not be denied to the citizens.

5. The public body has been cast the duty to notify for information of general public such matters within its knowledge and control as are vital to their life, health and livelihood but not commonly known.